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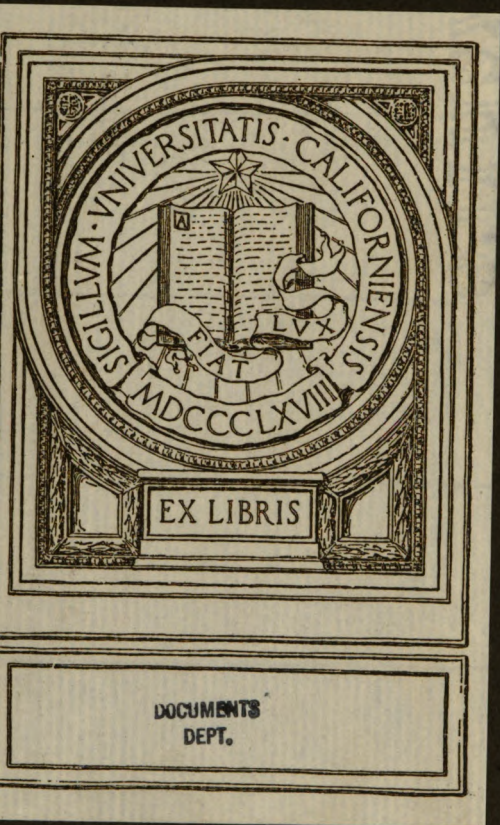
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MEMORANDUM

ON THE

Trade of Aden

FOR 1857-58.

BY CAPTAIN R. L. PLAYFAIR

First Assistant Political Resident.



Aden

Printed at the Jail Press.

1853.

TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

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1857/58

DOCUMENTS
DEPT.

Gift

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I have received from the Political Resident, a copy of a memorandum on the trade of Sind, by P. M. Dalzell Esquire, Deputy Collector of Customs at Kurra-
chee, for the official year 1857-58.

As it appears to me that much benefit must accrue to commerce from the publication of similar memoranda throughout India, in a form which will admit of ready comparison, I have prepared the following statement of the state of trade at the British settlement of Aden, during the same period.

Aden
1st. January 1859.

R. L. Playfair
First Assistant Political Resident
in charge of Customs.

800411

MEMORANDUM

on the
TRADE OF ADEN.

The province of Yemen, of which Aden is now the chief sea port, has been famous from all antiquity for the richness and fertility of its soil, the salubrity of its climate, and the number and wealth of its inhabitants. Commercial intercourse between this country and Syria existed at a period long anterior to the oldest profane historical records. The inspired writer in commiserating the glories of Tyre says "Arabia, and all the Princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs and rams and goats; in these were thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raama, they were thy merchants; they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. Harran and Canneh and Eden, (*Aden*) the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants" (*Ezek.* xxvii 21 to 23)

But in addition to its aromatic gums and other rich natural productions, which supplied the markets of Egypt and Phœnicia, a vast amount of wealth flowed into the country from exterior sources. From the earliest ages up to the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese doubled the Cape of Good Hope and were the means of directing the Indian trade to that route, its harbours, and particularly that of Aden, were the emporia of an extensive trade between the countries bordering the Mediterranean, and India, Persia, and the countries of the further East.

In ancient times the three great outlets for the produce of Yemen, were Mooza, Okelis, and Aden. At the time of the author of the *Periplus of the Erythræan Sea*, Mooza was a mart of great trade but since then it has been carried inland by the gradual accretion of the coast. Shortly after this era Okelis also was abandoned, and the trade of Arabia Felix, which had sunk to a very

low ebb, was transferred to Aden, which became almost the sole commercial port in the country.

The discovery of the use of coffee about the fifteenth century, gave a fresh stimulus to the trade of Yemen; and to this event Mokha owes its existence. It rapidly increased in size and importance and speedily became the great depôt of the trade of Yemen, and about the beginning of the seventeenth century the English and Dutch East India Companies established factories there, and carried on a lucrative commerce with the Indian ports. Ships from all parts of the East frequented its harbours, and Kafilahs from Egypt, Syria, and even the eastern nations of Europe, flocked to its markets.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the French established a factory at Mokha, which was then at its highest state of prosperity, and almost the only outlet for the produce of the coffee country. The English, Dutch, and French, carried on a regular trade with it, and by means of the navigation round the Cape of Good Hope, the freight of coffee was considerably reduced and the consumption of it in Europe began proportionally to increase.

This trade continued unabated until 1839 when Aden became a British possession, and the superior qualifications of that port, under an enlightened government, gradually withdrew the commerce of Mokha, since when it has rapidly and steadily declined. Its ruin has been, and must continue to be, in inverse ratio to the prosperity of Aden; under the most favorable circumstances two trading ports could hardly flourish in such close proximity to each other, but this becomes an impossibility, where, as in the present case, the one has an indifferent anchorage, rapidly filling up, and where the worst features of Turkish misrule are prominent, while the other has a more favorable position, a capacious and secure harbour, and where the subject enjoys perfect civil and religious liberty. Thus the once flourishing port of Mokha has become a ruin, in the town there are not twenty houses in good repair, while two thirds are crumbling to pieces and deserted, and the great majority of its inhabitants have gone to Aden, to seek a livelihood

which they can no longer find in their native place.

From the occupation by the British in 1839, until 1850, customs dues were levied in Aden as in India, but it was found that the trade of the new settlement did not increase as rapidly as had been anticipated, and fell far short of the proportions which its geographical position had promised; and notwithstanding the increased protection to the persons and property of merchants frequenting the port, the inland cultivators and traders could not be induced to abandon the ancient channel by which their produce had been conveyed to the sea coast, even with the certainty of a better market in Aden.

The remedy for this evil lay in making the port free, which was done by Act X of 1850. The result is striking—During the seven years which preceded the opening of the port, the total value of trade, including imports and exports, aggregated Rupees 1,30,95,578, that of the last year exceeding the first by Rupees 10,17,268. During the seven years immediately after the port had been opened, the value of trade amounted to Rupees 4,21,97,937, the last year exceeding the first by Rupees 59,07,448. Thus it has been proved beyond doubt, that in a commercial point of view, Act X of 1850 was a measure of sound policy.

In 1844-45 the value of trade was Rupees 14,90,972, in 1857-58, it amounted to Rupees 1,14,55,523, in other words, during the comparatively short space of thirteen years it has increased eight fold, the value of this increase being almost a million sterling per annum.

The following is a summary of the trade for the official year ending 31st. May 1858.

<i>Imports</i> —Goods—Rupees	47,78,677
Treasure	22,41,798
	—————70,20,475
<i>Exports</i> —Goods—Rupees	28,36,374
Treasure	15,98,674
	—————44,35,048

Total Rupees 1,14,55,523

The subjoined table exhibits the items of trade, compared with the preceding year.

Classification of Goods.	Imports Rupees.	Exports. Rupees.	Total. Rupees.	Comparison with preceding year.	
				Increase. / Decrease.	
Ale & Porter..	38,170	"	38,170	22,294	"
Alkali (Pot- ash.)	"	1,527	1,527	"	8,484
Coals.	14,25,579	"	14,25,579	23,351	"
Coffee.	6,13,929	10,67,905	16,81,834	5,94,427	"
Cotton.	1,59,905	3,697	1,63,602	93,305	"
Dates.	59,548	28,712	88,260	42,107	"
Drugs.	42,107	53,659	95,766	83,058	"
Ghee.	56,106	2,602	58,708	"	1,44,687
Grains.	2,34,291	58,567	2,92,858	"	25,237
Gums and Resins. ... }	70,914	77,043	1,47,957	87,142	"
Hides & Skins	70,835	54,828	1,25,663	82,424	"
Ivory	3,39,535	3,68,675	7,08,210	4,88,665	"
Mats &c.	9,109	"	9,109	"	805
Metals.	79,233	28,515	1,07,748	52,590	"
Mother ' o Pearl Shells. }	4,048	650	4,698	"	2,270
Munjeet or Madder. }	5,650	38,447	44,103	11,381	"
Oils.	28,568	160	28,728	16,318	"
Piece Goods (Cotton and Silk)	9,71,789	7,94,301	17,66,090	"	1,20,374
Provisions. ...	4,191	5,051	9,242	3,845	"
Seeds.	13,337	9,646	22,983	14,267	"
Silk.	1,650	"	1,650	"	21,101
Spices.	1,04,787	28,402	1,33,189	61,312	"
Spirits.	23,963	1,090	25,053	9,817	"
Sundries	1,65,165	1,01,097	2,66,262	80,310	"
Sugar.	71,867	8,556	80,423	1,485	"
Tea.	5,686	"	5,686	"	5,297
Tobacco.	1,52,327	42,366	1,94,693	"	11,346
Wax.	1,042	14,008	15,050	1,268	"
Wines.	7,038	"	7,038	"	5,219
Wood.	10,415	"	10,415	"	3,047
Wearing Apparel.) ...	7,187	"	7,187	939	"
Wurru or Bastard Saffron. }	700	46,870	47,570	18,537	"
Total.	47,78,677	28,36,374	76,15,051	14,44,090	3,47,817
Treasure.	22,41,798	15,98,674	38,40,472	11,86,608	"
Grand Totals	70,20,475	44,35,048	114,55,523	26,30,698	3,47,817

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Decrease.

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Many of the articles in the foregoing table require no explanation—a few however deserve notice. It is to be understood that this table refers solely to goods imported and exported by sea, and does not include interior traffic.

Alkali, an impure carbonate of Potash, is manufactured in large quantities in the immediate vicinity of Aden, from the salsolaceous plants which everywhere abound; it is principally used in Aden, but a small quantity is exported. This item shews a decrease of Rupees 8,434 over the previous year.

Coals form by far the largest item in the column of imports, amounting to nearly one third of the whole, excluding treasure. In this, owing to the increased steam communication with Aden, there is an advance of Rupees 23,351. It is a question whether or no this item should be exhibited in the trade returns, as it is entirely used by the steamers which ply between Suez and India, Mauritius and Australia, but upon this steam communication the prosperity of Aden is in a great measure dependant, and many persons obtain their livelihood from the various dépôts.

Coffee is an important article of trade and it is satisfactory to observe that there has been a very large increase both in the imports and exports of this commodity, amounting to nearly six lacs of Rupees. The coffee imported into Aden, is principally brought from the Red Sea, for exportation to Bombay, France, and America. The difference between the imports and exports, amounting to about $4\frac{1}{2}$ lacs of Rupees, indicates the quantity which has reached Aden overland, direct from the coffee country. The total value of the transactions in coffee, (Rupees 16,81,834) represents an amount of nearly 60,000 cwt. The best coffee comes from the neighbourhood of Oudain. The trees are cultivated in terraces on the sides of the mountains; for the most part they are watered only by the rain, but some are irrigated from cisterns built to contain rain water. The latter yield crops twice a year, but the second is seldom thoroughly ripe, and is always inferior to the first. There is no great consumption of coffee in Yemen, the nation

of the country prefer a decoction of the husks, called *kishr*.

Cotton is imported from India chiefly for consumption in the country, a very small portion is exported. It is cultivated to a certain extent, but not in sufficient quantities to meet the demand for it. The increase in this article during the past year is Rupees 93,305.

Ghee—There has been a large decrease in ghee; it is difficult to account for this satisfactorily, but the actual, is not so great as the apparent decrease. During the entire season of 1855-56 a great part of the Somalie coast including the port of Berbera, whence most of the ghee is obtained, was blockaded, in consequence of an outrage committed upon a British expedition sent there by the Government of Bombay: the Somali traders were unable during that year to command a market for their ghee, and in the following season brought the produce of two years to Aden. Thus the exports and imports in 1857-58 must, in this instance, be considered as compared with produce of the two previous years.

A large increase is apparent in two other articles of African produce, gums and ivory, in the latter article alone amounting to Rupees 4,88,665.

Munjeet or Maddar in which there is an increase of Rupees 11,381 is entirely the produce of Arabia.

There is a decided decrease in the value of Piece Goods, it is probable that this does not occur in British manufactures, but is owing to American vessels paying in money for the goods they receive here, instead of importing as heretofore, cotton cloth.

The principal article in which a decided increase or decrease has occurred may thus be summarized.

Increase.

Coals.	Rs. 23,381	Drugs.	Rs. 83,058	Spices.	Rs. 64,312
Coffee.	„ 5,94,427	Gums.	„ 82,424	Sundries.	„ 80,310
Cotton.	„ 93,305	Ivory.	„ 4,88,665	Trea- } sure. }	„ 11,86,608

Decrease.

Ghee. Rs. 1,41,687	Piece	} Rs. 1,20,374	Tobacco. Rs. 11,346
Grain. „ 25,237	Goods.		Wines „ 5,219
	Silk. „ 21,101		

The following table shows the distribution of the trade of Aden during the past year.

IMPORTS.	1856-57.	1857-58.	Increase.	Decrease.
United Kingdom.	14,59,741	14,66,277	6,536	„
Bengal.	1,69,546	1,82,150	12,604	„
Madras.	100	410	310	„
Bomday & subordinate } Ports. }	10,01,710	8,92,786	„	1,08,924
Cutch, Verawell } & Porebunder... }	2,62,900	3,39,783	76,880	„
Malabar.	49,780	1,07,025	57,245	„
Singapore.	11,364	15,420	14,056	„
Ports in the Red Sea.	5,31,644	8,17,084	2,85,440	„
Africa exclusive of Do.	4,63,000	5,45,058	82,058	„
Arabia Do. Do.	1,06,251	1,26,635	20,384	„
Persian Gulf.	41,349	88,951	47,602	„
United States of America..	1,50,661	1,83,220	32,559	„
France.	2,425	13,878	11,453	„
Total.	42,50,471	47,78,677	5,28,206	1,08,924
Treasure.	16,36,150	22,41,798	6,05,648	„
Grand Total.	58,86,621	70,20,475	11,33,854	1,08,924

Exports.	1856-57.	1857-58.	Increase.	Decrease.
United Kingdom.	26,785	2,08,042	1,81,277	„
Bengal.	5,777	860	„	4,917
Madras.	100	200	100	„
Bombay & subordinate Ports.	2,56,018	5,87,696	3,31,678	„
Cutch, Verawell) & Porebunder...)	17,585	14,259	„	3,326
Malabar.	300	500	200	„
Singapore.	600	300	„	300
Ports in the Red Sea.	4,47,644	6,31,649	1,84,005	„
Africa exclusive of Do. ...	4,53,177	4,18,440	„	34,737
Arabia. Do. Do. ...	1,92,489	83,835	„	1,08,604
Persian Gulf.	41,358	58,348	16,990	„
United States of America..	1,49,313	2,58,721	1,09,408	„
France.	3,10,620	5,12,144	2,01,524	„
Hamburg.	18,794	„	„	18,794
Australia.	„	34,926	34,926	„
Mauritius.	„	26,454	26,454	„
Total.	19,20,490	28,36,374	9,15,884	1,70,678
Treasure.	10,17,714	15,98,674	5,80,960	
Grand Total.	29,38,204	44,35,048	14,96,844	1,70,678

ABSTRACT.

	1856-57.	1857-58.	Increase.
Imports.	53,86,621	70,20,475	11,33,854
Exports.	29,38,204	44,35,048	14,96,844
Total.	88,24,825	1,14,55,523	26,30,698

The imports from Bombay and the subordinate ports of that presidency, exhibit a decrease of Rupees 1,08,924, on the other hand the exports to these ports have increased by Rupees 3,31,678.

The imports from, and exports to, Africa constitute a very large item in the trade of Aden, aggregating for the past year Rupees 9,63,496—a few remarks on this subject appear necessary.

The great outlet for the commerce of Africa is Berbera, situated due south of Aden. It is rather an encampment than a town, the inhabitants during the annual fair, or from October to April living in huts of reeds, mats, and sticks, at other times it is deserted. Nevertheless it has been a mart of great trade from the earliest ages; in the time of the author of the *Periplus* or shortly before the christian era it was styled Mosayllon, and was then much frequented by Greek and Egyptian merchants, who purchased their commodities cheaper there, than in the Sabeen markets.

The annual fair is one of the most interesting sights on the coast. Tribes the most remote and diverse meet here for a short time, to be again scattered in all directions, bugalows from Muscat, Soor, Bussora, Baherain Porebunder, Mandavie, and Bombay, meet those from Aden and the ports in the Red Sea. A perfect Babel of confusion reigns, and disputes which are settled by the spear and dagger are of daily occurrence, but amidst all this turmoil, the traders are unmolested; each under the protection of his chosen "Abban", barter the produce of his country for the gums and valuable merchandize of Africa; none are more successful than the fat and wealthy Banians, who by their superior capital, cunning, and influence, rapidly distance all competitors.

The chief articles of trade which reach Aden from Berbera, are sheep and cattle in great abundance, indeed this settlement is entirely supplied with meat from the African coast, ghee and coffee from the neighbourhood of Hurrur, various descriptions of grains and resins, ostrich feathers, and ivory.

A similar trade is carried on between Aden and various other ports on the African coast, but Berbera is

the principal emporium.

The following table exhibits the number and tonnage of square rigged sailing vessels, which visited the port during the year 1857-58, excluding steamers of all descriptions, of which on an average about one arrives in every two days.

ARRIVALS.	1857-58.		Increase.		Decrease.	
	No. of Vessels.	No. of Tons.	No. of Vessels.	No. of Tons.	No. of Vessels.	No. of Tons.
UNDER						
British Colors.	121	66,351	33	4,180	„	„
American Do.	12	6,846	„	151	„	„
French Do.	14	5,357	9	3,595	„	„
Hamburgh Do. ...	2	1,104	„	538	„	„
Prussian Do.	3	1,299	3	1,299	„	„
Arab Do.	6	3,315	2	1,593	„	„
Dutch Do.	1	762	1	762	„	„
Swedish Do.	1	300	„	„	„	436
Sardinian Do.	1	227	1	227	„	„
Grand Total. ...	161	85,561	49	11,909	„	436

From this it will be seen that with an unimportant decrease under the head of Swedish vessels, there has been a steady increase in the tonnage of every nation amounting in all to 11,909 tons.

To this must be added country craft, of which 1,120 vessels with an aggregate burden of 24,841 tons arrived during the past year. Thus the total tonnage

during 1857-58 as compared with the preceding year was as follows.

	1856-57.	1857-58.	Increase.
Arrivals.	1,00,358	1,10,401	10,043
Departures.	97,014	1,05,571	8,557
Total.	1,97,372	2,15,972	18,600

The principal ports from which country craft have come to Aden are as follows.

Ports, Bombay Presidency & Malabar coast.	Ports in Africa.	Ports in Red Sea.	Ports in Arabia out of Red Sea.	Ports in Persian Gulf.
Bombay.	Zanzibar.	Jedda.	Maculla.	Bussora.
Surat.	Berbera.	Hodaidah.	Shehr.	Bushire.
Cutch.	Zailah.	Mokha.	Howar.	
Verawell.	Bailool.	Lohaia.	Muscat.	
Porebunder.	Seearra.			
Tellicherry.	Ain Tarad.			
Cannanore.	Kurru.			
Calicut.	Mait.			
Barcoor.	Hais.			

The foregoing comprises the exterior trade of Aden, a large quantity of Arabian produce is, in addition to this, introduced by the daily kafilahs, of this there is no very accurate return; during the past year 1,12,803 camel loads of grain, fodder, vegetables, fruit, coffee, &c, were introduced for the supply of the market, and the following goods were passed into the interior by the return caravans.

Classification of Goods.	Quantity.	Rupees.
Cotton.	6,089 Cwts.	1,44,008
Dates.	1,749 "	6,208
Grains.	597 "	3,465
Metals.	1,257 "	9,680
Piece Goods.	702 Packages.	23,202
Spices.	1,222 Cwts.	9,208
Sugar.	167 "	1,658
Sundries.	30 Packages.	140
Tobacco.	1,660 Cwts. 806 Corges.	17,174
Grand Total.	"	2,14,743

If we estimate the produce brought into Aden from the interior at twice the value of the merchandize taken back, which experience has proved to be considerably under the truth, the entire value of trade during the past year will be about as follows.

<i>Exterior Exports.</i>	44,35,048	
<i>Interior do.</i>	2,14,743	
		46,49,791
<i>Exterior Imports.</i>	70,20,475	
<i>Interior do.</i>	4,29,486	
		74,49,961

Total Rupees. 1,20,99,752
or nearly one million and a quarter sterling.

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